

# Meeting not open to the public

**East  
Devon**

District Council

Date: 28 March 2011  
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Our Reference: CL

East Devon District Council  
Knowle  
Sidmouth  
Devon  
EX10 8HL

To: To: Members of the Office Accommodation Working Party  
(Councillors: Sara Randall Johnson, Graham Godbeer,  
Vivien Duval Steer, David Atkins, Steve Wragg.)  
Councillor Andrew Dinnis – Design Champion

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Mark Williams  
Donna Best  
Karen Jenkins

## **Office Accommodation Working Party Wednesday 6 April 2011 – 6.00 pm – Room 1**

### **AGENDA**

- |   | <u>Page/s</u> |
|---|---------------|
| 1. To receive the notes of the meeting held on 2 February 2011.   | 2 - 7         |
| 2. To receive any apologies for absence from members of the Working Party.  |               |
| 3. To consider any items, which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be dealt with as matters of urgency because of special circumstances.<br>(Note: Such circumstances need to be identified in the minutes. If you wish to raise a matter under this item, please do so in advance of the meeting by notifying the Chief Executive who will then consult with the Chairman). |               |
| 4. Office Relocation – Project Briefs<br><br>To discuss project briefs for the Office Relocation prepared by Mark Williams, Chief Executive.  | 8             |



# EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Report of a Meeting of the Office Accommodation Working Party held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 6 April 2011

**Present:** Councillors:  
Sara Randall Johnson  
Graham Godbeer  
Andrew Dinnis  
Vivien Duval Steer  
David Atkins  
Steve Wragg

**Officers:** Chris Lane - Democratic Services Officer  
Donna Best - Principal Estates Surveyor  
Karen Jenkins – Head of Organisational Development  
Mark Williams – Chief Executive  
Ed Freeman – Principal Planning Officer

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 7.20pm

### 13 **Confidentiality**

Councillor Steve Wragg questioned if the issues being discussed at the Working Party were confidential why a press release had been issued on the subject. It was noted that the press release had been issued in direct response to a press enquiry.

### 14 **Notes of meeting held on 2 February 2011**

Members received the notes of the meeting held on 2 February 2011.

### 15 **Office Relocation – Project Briefs**

Mark Williams, Chief Executive presented details of a project brief which were considered by members of the Office Accommodation Working Party.

#### Project 1 – Disposal of the Knowle

Members discussed the issue of the disposal of the Knowle and considered the five points made in the Chief Executive's report.

It was noted that development on the Manstone Depot site was constrained. It was considered that this site could be used for housing development and was particularly appropriate for the provision of affordable housing. This would mean moving the current depot to an alternative site outside the built up area. There was also the possibility of relocating Camperdown Depot to Liverton Business Park. Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor reported that there would be a Depot Review carried out shortly.

Members considered that the Knowle Offices were no longer fit for purpose as modern council offices and members questioned whether; bearing in mind the historical presence of council offices in Sidmouth there was a need for the Council to retain a physical presence in Sidmouth. Members emphasised the need to get the right development on the Knowle site as it was an important development for Sidmouth.

15 **Office Relocation – Project Briefs (Cont)**

**RECOMMENDED** that the following be agreed as a project brief of disposal of the Knowle:

- A) Maximise the value of the site consistent with the quality of Sidmouth and the planning framework;
- B) Ensure adequate sums are released to cover the costs of Projects 2 & 3;
- C) Release additional capital sums to assist the Council's Capital Programme?
- D) Relocation of Knowle depot to Manstone Depot (subject to a Depot Review decision);
- E) Appointment of Planning Consultants to submit planning application.

Project 2 – New Offices at Heathpark, Honiton

Members discussed the proposed project brief for the new offices at Heathpark, Honiton. There was an exciting opportunity within the project for including renewable energy technologies, but it was important to know the costs of including such features in the build and also the return timescale. It was also important to future proof the building from this point of view and the District Council should aim for good planning design for this building and also consider entering a partnership with firms such as EoN. The key was to make IT provision in the right place within the building. The cost of transitional arrangements such as supporting officers additional transport costs for a three period and possible bridging mortgage costs also needed to be considered.

Members discussed recent new Council Offices developments such as that at Tavistock for West Devon Borough Council and also those for North Devon District Council, West Dorset District Council and new offices for Michelmores Solicitors in Exeter. It was considered that setting up a Design Review Board to look at some of these office designs would be a good way forward. Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor agreed to arrange a visit for members.

**RESOLVED**

that Donna Best, Principal Estates Surveyor be requested to arrange a visit for Members to various new council and other appropriate new office designs within the South West..

**RECOMMENDED** that the following be agreed as a project brief for new offices at Heathpark, Honiton:

- A) Fully utilise site of Business Centre and adjoining former depot site with a good design that respects its location, improves service access and delivery to our customers, and delivers environmental benefits;
- B) Provide desk accommodation on the basis of desks for office based staff, hot desking arrangements for mobile officers. Offices will be as open plan as possible. Flexible meeting rooms/spaces (fully IT equipped) suitable for the reasonable use of the Council. Overall space reduction to be confirmed following further detailed review of space requirements;
- C) Ensure design of internal space facilitates effective team working and management practices consistent with what the work requires. Operate on the basis that mobile working will reduce the number of desks required. (Pilot to be initiated asap);

15 **Office Relocation – Project Briefs (Cont)**

- D) Provide café space area suitable for operation by a franchise and with capacity for use by the public;
- E) Provide adequate cycle storage facilities and changing facilities;
- F) Provide additional office space suitable for letting out so as to generate an income;
- G) Ensure reduced utility and running costs;
- H) Ensure a reduced carbon footprint for the organisation (in particular look to secure sponsorship for renewable energy features);
- J) Building Energy Rating reduced from C to B (with potential to go to an A);
- k) Ensure sufficient car parking is provided.

Project 3 – Refurbished Office Accommodation at the Town Hall, Exmouth

Members discussed the proposed project brief for refurbished office accommodation at the Town Hall, Exmouth and acknowledged the physical constraints of the existing Town Hall building. Donna Best reported that Devon County Council had recently indicated that they would wish to continue to occupy the offices for a further three years. Members questioned whether the Town Hall was the right building to base new offices for the Council in Exmouth and whether consideration should be given to disposing of it and finding another more suitable site in the town centre for offices for the District, County and Town Council's.

Concern was expressed about the time line issue slipping on the project and it was felt that the right way forward would be to refurbish the Town Hall location and look to more to more suitable offices in the longer term. There was also the need to have detailed survey as to what work was required as the Town Hall was currently not considered fit for purpose.

**RECOMMENDED** that the following be agreed as a project brief for refurbished office accommodation at the Town Hall, Exmouth:

- A) Fully utilise available accommodation;
  - B) Facilitate better working with the Town Council and DCC;
  - C) Provide accommodation reflecting a range of front line services;
  - D) Provide adequate cycle storage facilities and changing facilities;
  - E) Provide additional office space for letting out so as to generate an income;
  - F) Ensure reduced utility and running costs;
  - G) Ensure a reduced carbon footprint compared with current (in particular look to secure sponsorship for renewable energy features – including new mechanical and electrical equipment);
- Improve building energy rating from ?to B or C?

\*16 **Next meeting**

**RESOLVED**

that the next meeting of the Working Party to be held at date to be agreed in June 2011 to discuss practical steps needed to take the project forward.

